

Remarks

The non-final Office Action dated March 10, 2008 lists the following rejections: claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over Piedmont *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 4,228,418); and claims 2-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Piedmont in view of Praria (U.S. Patent No. 4,505,032).

Applicant respectfully traverses the § 102(b) rejection of claim 1 because the cited portions of the Piedmont reference do not correspond to the claimed invention which includes, for example, aspects directed to multiple resistor sub-bodies that are each connected to and situated between columns of taps. The Office Action erroneously asserts that Piedmont's conducting strips 30, 31 and 32 correspond to the claimed columns of taps. According to M.P.E.P. § 2111, the USPTO determines the scope of claims in patent applications not solely on the basis of the claim language, but upon giving claims their broadest reasonable construction in light of Applicant's specification as it would be interpreted by one of ordinary skill in the art. In this instance, Applicant submits that it would be readily apparent to the skilled artisan in light of Applicant's specification (*see, e.g.*, 6.1-6.5 of Figure 1 and the related discussion) that Piedmont's conducting strips 30, 31 and 32 are not columns of taps.

Moreover, Piedmont teaches that the only connection points in the resistive network shown in Figure 3 are terminals 20 and 21. For example, Piedmont teaches that the effective resistance between terminal 20 and 21 can be increased by severing segments of conductive strips 30, 31 and 32 (*e.g.*, segments 30a, 31a and/or 32a). *See, e.g.*, Col. 3:59 to Col. 4:8. Thus, Piedmont's conducting strips 30, 31 and 32 do not have taps that each can be used for outputting an output potential via a contact area that is connected to the concerning tap as in the claimed invention. Accordingly, Piedmont's conducting strips 30, 31 and 32 do not correspond to the columns of taps of the claimed invention.

In view of the above, the § 102(b) rejection of claim 1 is improper and Applicant requests that it be withdrawn. In an effort to facilitate prosecution, Applicant has amended claim 1 to recite that each of the resistor sub-bodies is situated between two of the columns of taps and connected to each of the taps of the two columns of taps. Applicant submits that these aspects are not taught or suggested by the Piedmont

reference. For example, Piedmont's conducting strips 30, 31 and 32 (*i.e.*, the Office Action's alleged columns of taps) each only have a single connection point to the resistive elements 33, 34...313, 314 (*i.e.*, the Office Action's alleged resistor sub-bodies). *See, e.g.*, Figure 3. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the § 102(b) rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully traverses the § 103(a) rejection of claims 2-8 (based upon the Piedmont reference) because the cited portions of Piedmont do not correspond to the claimed invention as discussed above in relation to the § 102(b) rejection of claim 1. In at least this regard, the § 103(a) rejection of claims 2-8 is improper in that these claims depend from claim 1. The rejections thus rely upon the same mischaracterization of the Piedmont reference. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the § 103(a) rejection of claims 2-8 be withdrawn.

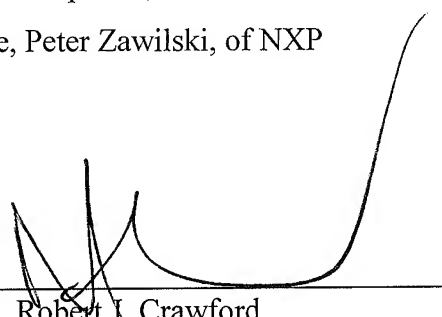
Applicant has added new claims 12-15, which Applicant submits are allowable over the cited references for at least the reasons discussed above relating to the § 102(b) rejection of claim 1. For example, the cited portions of the Piedmont reference do not teach or suggest columns of taps and resistor sub-bodies arranged as in claims 12-15.

In view of the remarks above, Applicant believes that each of the rejections has been overcome and the application is in condition for allowance. Should there be any remaining issues that could be readily addressed over the telephone, the Examiner is asked to contact the agent overseeing the application file, Peter Zawilski, of NXP Corporation at (408) 474-9063 (or the undersigned).

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